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OF JAMES I. WEDGWOOD.**

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**THE FINAL WORD IN REGARD TO
THE CONSECRATION OF
—JAMES I. WEDGWOOD—**

—BISHOP MATHEW'S LETTER—

From THE OCCULT REVIEW, JUNE 1918.



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THE FINAL WORD IN REGARD TO THE CONSECRATION
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—BISHOP MATHEW'S LETTER—

From The Occult Review, June 1918.

With reference to the discussion which has been going on in these columns with regard to the Old Catholic movement, and the section of this movement of which several prominent Theosophists are officials, I have received a letter from Bishop A. H. Mathew, who represented the original Old Catholic Church, and who states that he consecrated Mr. Frederick Samuel Willoughby, who in turn consecrated Messrs. King and Gauntlett, and later, assisted by two other Bishops or alleged Bishops of the movement, consecrated Mr. J. I. Wedgwood and Mr. F. James. Mr. Willoughby, it appears, was formerly Vicar of St. John's, Stockton-on-Tees, and left the Anglican Church under circumstances of which Bishop Mathew was at the time entirely ignorant. Bishop Mathew questions the validity of his own consecration of Mr. Willoughby, in view of the fact that some apparently essential part of the service was inadvertently omitted. Bishop Mathew questions in addition whether it would be possible for gentlemen holding Theosophical tenets "to have the necessary intention of receiving what Catholics mean by the Episcopate." For these reasons (he states) I do not recognize the validity of the episcopal orders or acts of the Theosophical gentlemen alluded to. In this connection I might quote the declaration signed by all persons

who have received ordination in the Old Catholic Church, and my readers will be able to form as good an opinion as I can as to whether these are compatible with Theosophical tenets.

In the name of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.—
Amen.

I . . . having formally united with the Ancient (Catholic) Church of England, Ireland and Scotland, hereby declare that I know of no canonical impediment in my ordination, and that it is my firm purpose and intention, if ordained, to devote my life to the ministry of that Church; and I do hereby solemnly undertake and promise canonical obedience to all my ecclesiastical superiors, and that I will faithfully hold and teach without alteration the Faith of the One Holy Catholic Apostolic and Orthodox Church, in accordance with the Decrees of the Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils, as laid down, in precise terms, in the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed of the Universal Church.

I profess my belief in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in the Dogma of Transubstantiation, in the Seven Sacraments, and in the Decrees of the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672.

It seems clear, to me at least, that the Old Catholic movement has been diverted by certain of its official representatives into a channel for which it was never intended. I can quite understand the strong feeling that many Theosophists hold as to the mixing of their tenets with a movement which is on the face of it antagonistic to the whole spirit and teaching of Theosophy, and I feel equal sympathy for the members of the old movement who resent the name of the Old Catholic Church being, as they must conceive, prostituted for purposes of Theosophical

propaganda. In view of what has been communicated to me on the subject, much of which I purposely omit in these notes, I feel that the matter is one of great regret from either standpoint. *What has happened would, in fact, be enough to make Madame Blavatsky turn in her grave.*

... The fact is, the Roman Catholic Church of today is an anachronism. It represents stagnation in a world of progress, and tradition and legend in a world of critical historical investigation. It sets itself in open opposition to the search for truth on the ground that truth has already been found once and for all. If a truth-seeker from time to time takes refuge within its fold, it is an admission on his part that he has abandoned this search for truth in despair. A spiritual weariness has set in, and he joins the Church which will relieve him of the trouble of thinking for himself.

DEFILING THE ALTAR.

TWO MORAL LEPERS AND A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY.

From JOHN BULL, June 1st., 1918.

LONDON

FREDERICK SAMUEL WILLOUGHBY, who, whilst Vicar of St. John's, Stockton-on-Tees, was exposed in these columns, has been admitted to membership of the Roman Catholic Church; it can only be because the authorities of that communion are ignorant of the man's antecedents—not merely of the earlier stages in his infamy which has fastened upon his reputation. Whether this amazing rascal aspires, or has been admitted, to any priestly office under the authority of Rome, we are unable to say, but since his immoral hardihood is equal to

almost any imposture, there once more devolves upon us the unpleasant duty of disclosing the man's real character, and warning his new associates that to come into contact with him is to touch contagious filth. The charges against the former Vicar of St. John's, Stockton, leading to his expulsion from the Church of England, were the subject of more than one paragraph in these columns during the summer of 1915. It was shown conclusively that he had used his position as a parish priest to corrupt and debauch boys and youths who, from their condition of pupilage in religious matters, were too prone to obey his vile behests. The immorality of the Stockton Vicar became a crying scandal, and the Bishop of Durham was compelled to take action. Willoughby had escaped the criminal dock, where he richly deserved to stand, but he was no longer an ordained priest of the Church of England.

A Pecksniffian "Prelate."

The next act of the sordid drama sees the disgraced prelate approaching the Old Catholic community, a sect claiming to be in the direct apostolic succession, and then owning more adherents in this country than the orthodox may imagine. To the Old Catholics, with an "Oratory" in Red Lion Square, W. C., this man in his extremity resorted; and they, ignorant of his character—the Church of England authorities, most unwisely, had done their best to hush the matter up—took him to their bosom. Playing his accustomed role of Pecksniff to perfection, Willoughby wormed his way into the confidence of his new associates, and was soon a "Bishop" among the Old Catholics. However, his preferment was of short dura-

tion. Scarcely had he grasped the crozier when we published another exposure, and the Old Catholics, to their honour, bundled him out neck and crop. Once more Willoughby was a moral outcast. His crimes had found him out.

Good Riddance.

Incidentally, his association with the Old Catholic community reft that body in twain, leaving the smaller portion—his adherents—well, less respectable than the other. Incredible as it may seem, Willoughby, whose faculty of inspiring confidence seems to have been almost mesmeric, had not only been lifted to the episcopate himself, but had actually before then “consecrated” other “Bishops,” including a Mr. J. I. Wedgwood, who has since attained to a position of commanding influence among the new section of the Old Catholics. However, on discovering that the hands thus “laid on” were dripping with filth, the best elements among the O. C.s withdrew, the spectacle of a vile debauchee in episcopal orders being more than they could stand. “Bishop” Wedgwood, however, remained. At this point, another sinister name emerges. Willoughby having made a “Bishop” of Wedgwood, Wedgwood, in his turn, consecrated Leadbeater! Our readers will recall the name as that of the notorious Theosophist—the friend and confidant of Mrs. Annie Besant—whom some years ago we exposed in these columns on account of teaching an immoral practice, less heinous, however, than that of Willoughby—especially to a young Indian destined by the Theosophical fraternity to figure as a new Messiah. Yet the inculca-

tor of this odious act and the new “Bishop” of the Old Catholics were one and the same man! With the full knowledge of the man’s career—the revolting details having been made public—Wedgwood not only took the hand of Leadbeater in fellowship, but exalted him to a seat of authority in a community called Christian. Soon afterwards Leadbeater was packed off to Australia. Wedgwood is no fool, although that is about the only compliment we can pay him.

“Ware Willoughby!”

When Wedgwood accepted consecration from Willoughby on February 13th, 1916, he can have been under no delusions as to the man’s character. At that date his crimes were notorious. Months previously, we had received and published a letter from an influential section of the Old Catholic Church, thanking us for our “timely exposure” of Willoughby’s “scandalous career,” and recording the “horror and indignation” of Old Catholics at his “deception and gross immorality.” Then came the schism among the O. C.s, and the scandal of Wedgwood’s consecration! It is a squalid story, and we should not recall it, were it not for the fact that Willoughby is still at large, and unless we are mistaken, contemplating, if not actually practising, further sacrilegious impostures upon the devout public. This time, if we can help it, he shall not succeed. Some crimes are unpardonable, and the proved villanies of this man Willoughby are amongst the number.

